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Our ref: 26.3827
Your ref:

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Railway House Nursery
1A Railway Street
Littleborough
OL15 8AG

Site	Railway House Nursery, 1A Railway Street, Littleborough, OL15 8AG
Proposal	Proposed change of use of an attached dwelling to form part of the existing nursery, together with retrospective regularisation of a former storage building and small garage converted to nursery accommodation.
Purpose	Proportionate heritage statement addressing nearby listed buildings and the adjacent Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area.
Status of site	The application site is not listed and is not located within a conservation area.
External works	No external works are proposed.

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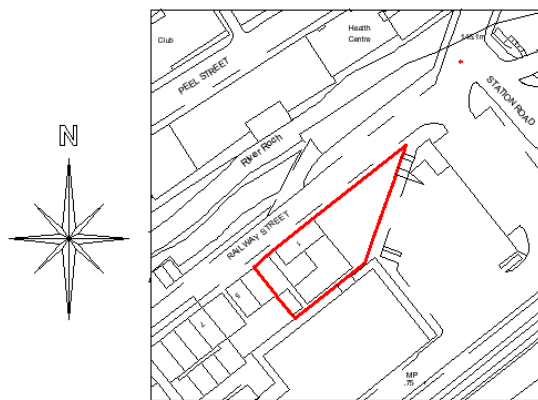
1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application at Railway House Nursery, 1A Railway Street, Littleborough.

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of an attached dwelling to form part of the existing nursery, together with the retrospective regularisation of a former storage building and small garage which have been converted to nursery accommodation, comprising a playroom and office.

The site itself is not a listed building and is not located within a conservation area. However, it lies close to designated heritage assets, including the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area and nearby Grade II listed buildings. This statement has therefore been prepared on a proportionate basis to assist the Local Planning Authority in considering whether the proposal would affect their significance or setting.

The key point for this application is that no external works are proposed. The existing buildings, elevations, roof forms, materials, rainwater goods, drainage arrangements, yard areas and playground areas will remain as existing. The proposal is therefore concerned with the use of existing accommodation rather than any physical change to the appearance of the site.



Scale 1:1250

SITE LOCATION PLAN

INSERT FIGURE 1 - SITE LOCATION PLAN

2. Site and Surroundings

Railway House Nursery is an established childcare facility situated on Railway Street, Littleborough. The site contains a group of existing buildings comprising the main nursery building, an attached dwelling, a former workshop and a former garage.

The surrounding area has a mixed town centre edge character, influenced by the railway station, historic commercial development, residential properties and later twentieth-century buildings. The site is close to the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area, but falls outside the designated boundary.

2.1 Existing Buildings

The principal nursery building is finished predominantly in white render with decorative mock-Tudor boarding to the front elevation. The rear elevation is rendered and the building has a slate roof with brick corbel detailing at the eaves supporting rainwater goods. Modern uPVC pipework and above-ground drainage are visible externally.

The attached dwelling, which is subject to the proposed change of use, has a more domestic appearance, with pebble-dash finish and facing brickwork.

The former workshop, which forms part of the retrospective element of the application, is constructed in facing brickwork with a concrete tiled roof and a flat roof section finished in metal cladding.

The former garage, also forming part of the retrospective element, is a modest facing brick structure with a concrete tiled roof.

These buildings are not listed. On the basis of the information provided, they are not visible on the 1890 historic mapping and are therefore understood to be later additions to the townscape rather than early historic buildings forming part of the original nineteenth-century development of Littleborough.



INSERT FIGURE 2 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

3. Proposed Development

The proposal comprises two related elements. First, the change of use of an existing attached dwelling so that it forms part of the established nursery. Second, the retrospective regularisation of the use of a former storage building and small garage as nursery accommodation, comprising a playroom and office.

No external alterations are proposed as part of the application. There would be no extension to any building, no demolition, no alteration to roof forms, no replacement external materials, no changes to window or door openings and no new boundary treatment.

As set out in the Flood Risk Statement prepared for the same application, the proposal will not alter the floor levels of existing buildings or playground areas. No breaking of ground is proposed, no new hardstanding is proposed, no soft landscaping is to be removed and the existing drainage arrangements will remain unchanged.

The appearance of the site from Railway Street and from the wider surrounding area will therefore remain as existing.

4. Heritage Context

The relevant heritage consideration is not direct alteration to a heritage asset, but whether the continued use and regularisation of existing buildings could affect the setting or significance of nearby designated heritage assets.

4.1 Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area

The application site is adjacent to, but outside, the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area. The conservation area is focused on the historic town centre, including its traditional buildings, streetscape, commercial core and the area around the railway station.

The significance of the conservation area is primarily derived from its historic townscape value, traditional building forms, surviving historic street pattern, use of traditional materials and the relationship between commercial, civic and transport-related development within the centre of Littleborough.

The application site sits at the edge of that context but does not itself fall within the conservation area. The proposal would not alter the external appearance of the site, and would not affect views into, out of, or within the conservation area.

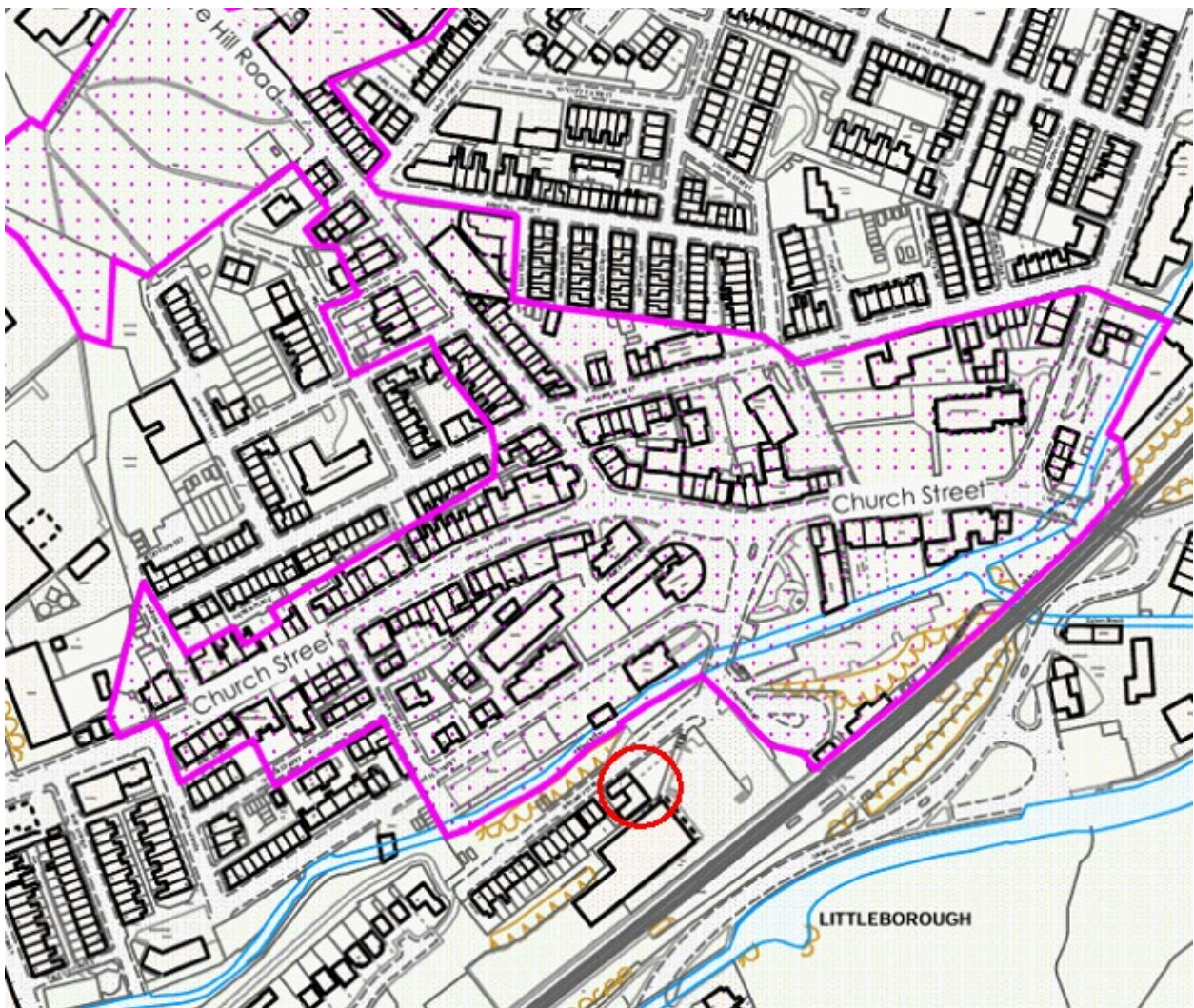


FIGURE 3 - CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY EXTRACT

4.2 The Roundhouse, Wheatsheaf Buildings, The Square - Grade II

The Roundhouse, Wheatsheaf Buildings, is a Grade II listed building located at The Square. The Historic England list entry describes it as an early 1860s public house and shops, constructed of rock-faced stone with a slate roof, arranged on a distinctive semi-circular plan with three storeys and detailed historic elevations.

Its significance is drawn from its architectural interest, distinctive plan form, traditional masonry construction, surviving historic detailing and its association with the commercial and social development of Littleborough. It is experienced primarily within the historic town centre environment around The Square.

4.3 Littleborough War Memorial - Grade II

Littleborough War Memorial is a Grade II listed structure on Railway Street. The Historic England list entry records that it was dedicated in 1922 and designed by Bradshaw, Hope and Gass of Bolton. It comprises a York stone obelisk on a square pedestal and platform, with commemorative plaques recording the fallen of the two World Wars.

Its significance is principally communal and historic, as a public memorial, together with architectural interest arising from its formal stone design and landmark position within Littleborough.

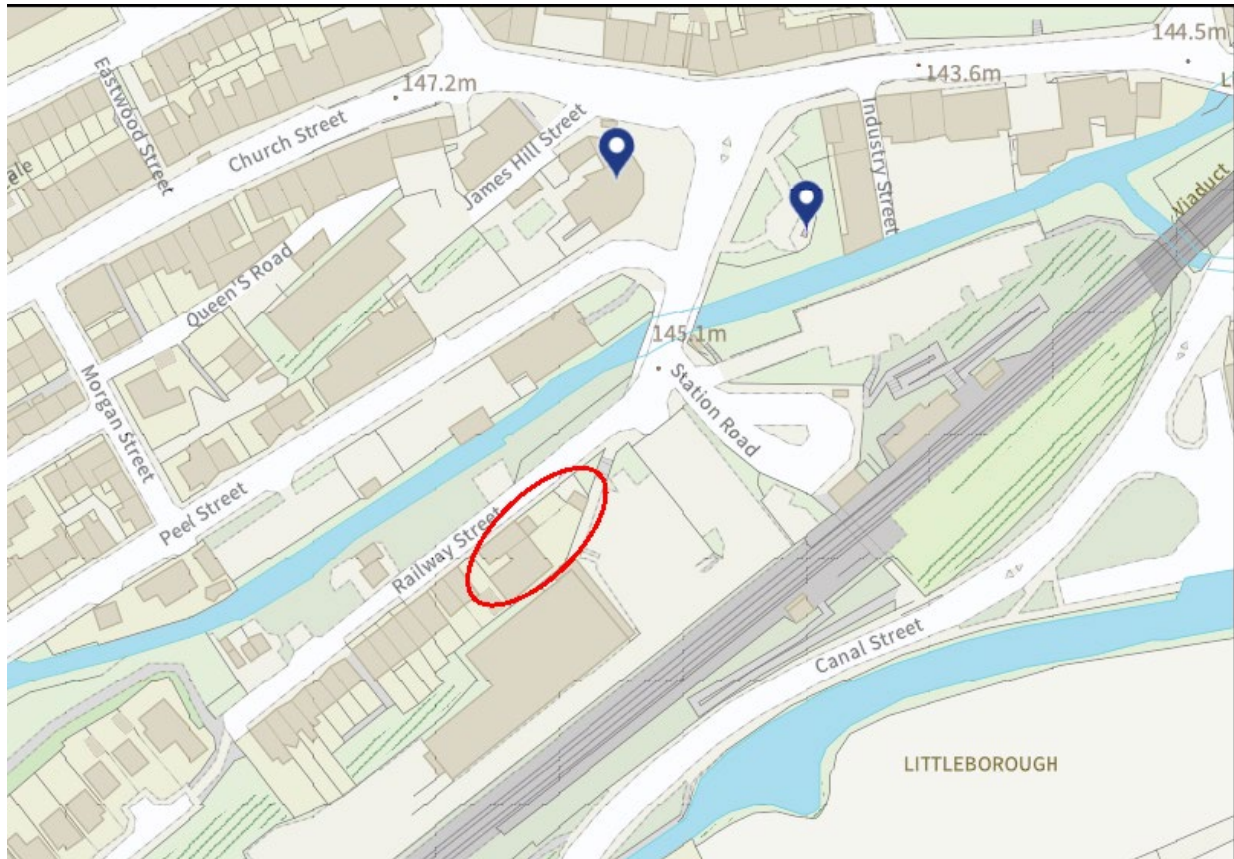


FIGURE 4 - NEARBY LISTED BUILDINGS

5. Relevant Planning Policy

5.1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. Although the site is not within the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area, the assessment has considered whether the proposal would affect its setting or significance.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting, in a manner proportionate to the asset's importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal.

The Framework requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Where no harm arises, no heritage balancing exercise is required beyond recognising that the proposal preserves the relevant significance.

5.3 Local Planning Policy

Rochdale planning policy seeks to protect and enhance local character, including the Borough's listed buildings, conservation areas and wider historic environment. In this case, the proposal is limited to the change of use and regularisation of existing buildings, with no external alterations and therefore no impact on local townscape character.

6. Assessment of Significance

The nearby designated heritage assets are of recognised heritage significance. The Roundhouse derives its significance from its architectural and historic interest as a distinctive nineteenth-century commercial building within the historic core of Littleborough. The War Memorial derives significance from its commemorative, communal, historic and architectural value.

The Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area derives significance from the collective value of its historic buildings, street pattern, traditional materials and town centre character.

The application site has a limited relationship with that significance. It is outside the conservation area, is not listed and contains buildings of later date and mixed appearance. The site is experienced as an existing nursery and associated group of buildings. Its contribution to the wider heritage setting is therefore modest and largely neutral.

Crucially, as no external changes are proposed, the contribution presently made by the site will not alter as a result of the application.

7. Heritage Impact Assessment

7.1 Effect on the Application Site

The proposal will not alter the external appearance of any building within the application site. Existing wall finishes, roof coverings, window and door openings, rainwater goods, pipework, above-ground drainage, hardstanding, playground areas and boundary conditions will remain unchanged.

The change of use of the attached dwelling and the retrospective regularisation of the former workshop and garage are therefore neutral in visual and heritage terms.

7.2 Effect on the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area

The site lies adjacent to, but outside, the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area. The proposal would not introduce new built form, new materials, signage, lighting, plant, enclosure, roof alterations or external works.

There would be no change to the way the site is seen from Railway Street or from the conservation area. Views into and out of the conservation area would remain as existing. The character and appearance of the conservation area would therefore be preserved.

7.3 Effect on the Setting of Listed Buildings

The proposal would not alter the physical or visual relationship between the application site and the nearby listed buildings. There would be no change to the setting of The Roundhouse, Wheatsheaf Buildings, or the Littleborough War Memorial.

The special architectural and historic interest of those listed buildings would remain unaffected. Their significance would continue to be appreciated in the same way as existing.

7.4 Overall Level of Heritage Impact

Having regard to the nature of the proposal, the overall heritage impact is assessed as neutral. The proposal would preserve the setting and significance of nearby listed buildings and would preserve the character and appearance of the adjacent conservation area.

No harm, including less than substantial harm, has been identified.

8. Conclusion

This Heritage Statement has been prepared on a proportionate basis, recognising that the application site is not listed and is not within a conservation area, but is located close to the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area and nearby Grade II listed buildings.

The proposal comprises the change of use of an attached dwelling to form part of the existing nursery and the retrospective regularisation of existing nursery accommodation within a former storage building and garage.

No external works are proposed. There will be no change to the external appearance of the buildings, no alteration to materials, no change to roof forms, no demolition, no extensions, no changes to levels and no changes to external drainage or hardstanding.

The proposal will therefore have no adverse effect on the character or appearance of the adjacent Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area and no adverse effect on the setting or significance of nearby listed buildings, including The Roundhouse, Wheatsheaf Buildings and Littleborough War Memorial.

The proposal preserves the relevant heritage significance and is acceptable in heritage terms. It accords with the statutory duties contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the heritage objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Appendix A - Sources Consulted

- Historic England, National Heritage List for England: The Roundhouse, Wheatsheaf Buildings, List Entry No. 1068526.
- Historic England, National Heritage List for England: Littleborough War Memorial, List Entry No. 1436965.
- Rochdale Borough Council conservation area mapping: Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area.
- National Planning Policy Framework, Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- Planning Practice Guidance: Historic environment.
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.